

1864

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William Davis and Elizabeth Hope Davis

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by

Mary Ann Davis Moulton Smith, daughter

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A brief sketch of the history of William Davis and Elizabeth Hope,  
Father and mother of Mary Ann Davis Houlton Smith, written by her-  
self November, 14, 1923.

My father William Davis was born Jan. 2, 1830 in Wilsford, Wiltshire on a farm and became an expert plowman and took prizes at the plowing matches held in that county. He married Elizabeth Hope about 1854 in England near where they both were born and raised. He was baptized Feb. 2, 1852 by Elder George Stone probably near the place where he was born.

My mother was probably baptized at the same time and place. They made arrangements to sail from Liverpool on the sailing ship Hudson, in the latter part of May, 1864. They had four children at that time. The date of sailing was postponed for a few days and father and mother, having disposed of the household goods went to visit at my mother's parents home until time set for sailing. While visiting there, their youngest child, about 2 years old, was taken ill and died on May 29, and they had to be in Liverpool the next day so they had to leave without the privilege of attending the funeral of their little daughter. This was a severe trial but there was no help for it as the ship would leave them if they were not there in time.

It was a sorrowful parting but their faith in the Gospel was strong and as quickly as possible they got on board the ship which sailed on the 31st. of May, 1864. They were some six weeks and a few days on the Atlantic Ocean, landing at New York July 19. From New York they went to the village of Wyoming, which is on the Missouri river where they were met by the ox teams sent from Utah to bring the emigrants across the plains.

Not many days after starting my mother and my little brother Moroni, then six years of age, were taken ill with dysentery, about the same time. My father was doing all he could to help and comfort my dear mother who was near to death, poor little Moroni, in a weak voice called "Daddy, Daddy" father went to him and said "My dear child what do you want?" He said "I want some soup" Well said father "try to lie still a few minutes so I can attend to mamma and I will try to get you some soup" he turned to see what he could do for mother who was in the throes of death. She said "I feel that I am about to leave you" "Oh don't say that Lizzie I can't do without you, let me pray with you". He breathed a prayer to his Heavenly Father to spare her life for the sake of their children but when he looked at her again she was dying. Some of the sisters came to see what they could do to help. Then father turned his attention to Moroni, he had got some soup and took it to him but found he was too late. His dear child was dead and his dear wife also. So poor father had to bury his wife and child by the wayside without a coffin and with very little time for ceremonies. We finally landed in Utah without any more serious trouble. My uncle William Hail Stone who had been in Utah some years came and met us at Echo Canyon and brought us with him into this valley or at least to Hailstone ranch where he made his home for many years.

April 10th. 1865 my father was married to Mary Goddard Collins in the endowment house, she had also lost her husband on the plains in 1864, in their way coming to Utah. I want to say in justice to my step-mother, that she was a true and faithful wife to my father and a splendid, good mother to me and my brother, who also lost his life three years after we came here, he drowned in the Provo river while trying to cross a wagon when the river was high. Father and his new wife seemed to be suited to each other, both being of a kind and generous disposition.

They lived by the side of the road as the poem says and proved to be hospitable and kind to hundreds who in passing their home in cold or stormy weather, in need of something to eat, were always made welcome at the Davis ranch.

Father raised a nice family of four sons and two daughters by his second wife, all of whom are still living respected citizens of the community. Father acted as presiding Elder at Elkhorn for some years and held the office of high priest. Later he brought his family to Heber and bought him a home. He died May the 7th. 1891, a honored and respected man. His wife, altho 85 years of age is still living on the old ranch and still wears the pleasant, cheerful smile that has made her so many friends throughout her long life. Father and her had both passed through severe trials both having to part with thier loved ones and bury them in unknown graves on the plains. But after much tribulations comes blessings. In 1866 and 1887 Father took part in the Black Hawk Indian war and through his industry and thrift, left his widow and children in fairly good circumstances at the time of his death. Few men have been called to pass through more severe trials, still he was jovial and cheerful as long as he lived and his faith in God never faltered. May we, his children emulate his example and follow in his foot steps.

Mary Ann Davis Moulton Smith.